



SOUTHEAST NEWS

PUBLISHED BY THE SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Two Associations Pick New Leaders

Two associations in the Southeast Conference elected moderators at their annual meetings in September.

The Alabama-Tennessee Association selected the Rev. James Smalley, pastor of Pilgrim Congregational UCC, of Chattanooga, TN, as moderator. The Georgia-South Carolina Association voted in Judy Manning, a member of Central Congregational United Church of Christ of DeKalb County, GA, as moderator.

Elected as vice-moderators were the Rev. Andrew Frierson, pastor of First United Church of Christ in Sweetwater, TN, for Alabama-Tennessee; and the Rev. Robert Johnson, a member of First Congregational Church, UCC, of Atlanta, for Georgia-South Carolina.

About 60 delegates, clergy and visitors attended the two-day meeting for Alabama-Tennessee on Sept. 13-14 at the United Church of Huntsville, UCC, AL.

About 40 came to the meeting for Georgia-South Carolina on Sept. 20-21 at Trinity United Church, UCC, in Jonesboro, GA.

Dr. Robert Smith, Director of the Lay Institute for Faith and Life at Columbia Theological Seminary in Atlanta, was the keynote speaker in Huntsville.

(A complete list of offices and positions is found below.)

Oak Grove Fair A Sellout

The Oak Grove Country Fair raised a record of about \$23,00 in August. The 19th annual fair, sponsored by Oak Grove Congregational Christian Church, UCC, of Pine Mountain, GA, drew as many as 15,000 people for two days of music, barbecue, and 191 arts and crafts exhibits.

The proceeds from ticket sales, which are handled separately from the church, went to a local college, a rehabilitation program for children, a food pantry, a home for battered women and children, and church-related groups and institutions.

In addition, Oak Grove Church raised money for its program by selling barbecue during the Aug. 18-19 event.

Cathy and Doyle Hagler, members of Oak Grove, were co-chairs. They had met at the fair about 12 years ago.

Conference Prepares for World Meeting In November

About 22 Southeast Conference subcommittees are working to host the Annual Meeting of the United Church Board for World Ministries in November in Atlanta.

The meeting of the corporate board on Nov. 8-11 will draw about 400 board members, officers, missionaries and staff to the Conference.

To be held at the Lanier Plaza Hotel and Conference Center off Interstate 85 North at Monroe Drive, the meeting is the first time the 182-year-old missionary body has met in the Conference.

A number of events during the meeting have been highlighted for local church participation.

3:45 PM, Friday, Nov. 8: Bible Study on Annual Meeting theme, "You Shall be My Witnesses," led by Aruna Gnanadason, Director of the World Council of Churches submit on Women in Church and Society in Geneva, Switzerland.

7:30 PM, Friday: Open House Conversations on several topics, including Worship Resources from the World Council of Churches Assembly; Conversations with UCC officers; Ecumenical Decade of the Churches in solidarity with Women; Interfaith Dialogue; Conversations with Missionaries; Changes in Eastern Europe and the USSR; and Developments in South Africa.

8:30 AM, Saturday: "The Mission of Witnessing" Plenary Regional Forum including worship, Bible study and reflection on the meeting theme with church leaders from the Middle East.

12 Noon, Saturday: One Great Hour of Sharing luncheon (Cost is \$10.12).

2:30 PM, Saturday: Regional Forums on Africa, East Asia and the Pacific; Europe; Latin America and the Caribbean; and Southern Asia.

6:00 PM, Saturday: Dinner. (Cost is \$16.15)

7:45 PM, Saturday: Presentation on witnessing in the Southeast Conference.

6:30 PM, Sunday: Global Festival Procession from Martin Luther King, Jr. Center to First Congregational Church.

7:00 PM: Global Festival Worship at First Congregational Church, Houston and Courtland streets.

Church participants are asked to bring church banners and chalices to the Conference office by Nov. 1 for the closing communion service.

A letter with complete participation information and volunteer requests was sent to each church in early October.

The Conference Local Arrangements Committee is headed by Rev. Joyce Myers-Brown. She can be called at (404) 876-2421.

CONFERENCE COMMENTS:

The Power of Reconciliation

Dear Friends:

Ten years ago, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ voted to be in "Full Communion" with the Evangelical Church of the Union (EKU), the German church.

EKU combines Lutheran and Reformed bodies that are the roots of part of the United Church of Christ through the former Evangelical and Reformed Church.

Then divided by necessity into West and East branches, the two ECU bodies already had voted for "Full Communion." It was an intentional, committee partnership "to be lived into."

I represented the Office of Church Life and Leadership on the ECU-UCC Committee, and attended the Iser Cohnl Conference in Germany in 1982. The conference introduced me to, among other things, the Services for Peace and Reconciliation which were celebrated annually during a week in November.

The power of Christian congregations confessing and praying together across not only oceans but political, social, economic and other human divisions, is in evidence: The reports through the European desk of our United Church Board for World Ministries attests to the power of those linkages of churches between former West and East Germany in the recent changes in Eastern Europe. We have much to learn from this model of missions between the ECU and UCC.

The Annual Meeting of the World Board which the Conference is privileged to host in Atlanta in November is an example of worldwide partnership. (I hope that many of us will take advantage of the opportunity to attend. Information has already been sent to all the churches.)

Our partnership with the Iowa Conference also has many possibilities for sharing in Christ's ministry and mission to which we can look forward, and which can become a model of mission across distances.

But all ventures which bridge distances, alienations or differences are moved by God's power of reconciliation in Jesus Christ.

We can presently apply reconciliation in the Southeast Conference in terms of pastor-parish, social, theological, historical, racial or whatever divisions.

I would invite you to utilize this Service of Corporate Reconciliation found in the Book of Worship, Page 275, which contains this patent Confession of Sin:

"Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what has become for us a consuming fire of judgment. Set us free from a past we cannot change, open to us a future in which we can be changed; and grant us grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen."

Renewal comes through God's reconciling power. A penitent people are people of promise.

Faithfully,
Roger Knight

GUEST COLUMN: The Perils and the Promises

By Mitch Johnson, Associate Conference Minister

Church growth and development within the Southeast Conference is alive and well, although it has not turned out to be an exact science.

This comment perhaps could be applicable to every other place in the United Church of Christ community. What makes it notably relevant in the Southeast Conference is in what it says about the added racial, ethnic, cultural and religious complexity of our region.

For instance, why would a church be “fired-up” one day with a vision and assurances that its ministry might best be carried on with a new identity, a new outreach and a new location, but soon thereafter this church slips into an equally passionate determination to languish or perhaps die in its historic place?

Why, oh why, does one church see the mission imperatives of demographic data and know that support is specifically available, but yet it chooses to remain indifferent to the opportunities?

On the other hand, why would a modest little rural church with a vision to expand its ministry move ahead to remodel its building and empower its leadership even before it gets sanction or material help from outside sources?

What, pray tell me, draws churches from other denominations to us, urgently seeking adoption into the United Church of Christ faith community, while at the very same time some of our beloved churches trouble us with threats and move to disassociate themselves from us for reasons of their own?

These things are examples of how fragile the whole process of church development can be, especially in this region.

What inform us, however, are the instances where the fervor of evangelism has overpowered the potentially disabling fears and stresses of change.

A few people grab brooms, mops and scrub buckets and head for Macon, GA, to clean out a church closed and inactive for several years. The results are that residual congregation, feeling the power of the embrace of the larger church, is now awakened to new possibilities for its ministry.

Congregations with special problems at several places are stirring with new vitality aroused through the energy of inspired leadership and hope and promise.

A convincing word comes to mind as I review the struggle and sometimes the agony of our church development program. It is a real challenge and fearful to know that our Conference is already committed to developing 15 new churches and to renewing five established churches over the next 10 years of our global United Church of Christ emphasis.

The peril is there for sure, but there is also promise, “... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in ... (Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, South Carolina and parts of Mississippi and Northwest Florida) and to the ends of the earth ...”

Small Church Expert Speaks to East Ala.

An expert on small churches, the Rev. David E. Ray, will speak at the Annual Meeting of the East Alabama-West Georgia Association on Oct. 19 in Alexander City, AL.

The Rev. Ray is author of "Small Churches Are the Right Size," and "All About Small Churches," due to be published in 1992. He has lectured and consulted on small churches in several denominations.

He is a half-time Area Minister for the Iowa Conference of the United Church, and half-time pastor of the United Church of Christ Congregational Church in Emmetsburg, IA.

Since seminary, Rev. Ray has studied small and rural churches. "Small churches are the right size to be all that God expects a church to be," he says, "and they think and act very differently in comparison to churches of other sizes."

Angolan Clergy to Visit

Two clergy of the United Church of Christ's partner church in Angola will tour the Conference in October and November. Angola recently concluded a 16-year civil war.

The Rev. Ricardo Uliengue Epalanga, General Secretary of the Evangelical Congregational Church, and the Rev. Elias Mateus Isaac will be available to churches in Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee.

The Angolan church is rooted in the work of 19th century Congregational missionaries. African-American churches in the Southeast Conference aided that effort.

Contact Carl Dille at (615) 277-3736 for visits between Oct. 16-23 in Tennessee; Revs. Richard Sales or James Myers at (205) 879-1624 and (205) 942-1857 for visits between Oct. 24-27 in Alabama; and Rev. Joyce Myers-Brown at (404) 876-2421 for visits in Atlanta Oct. 28-Nov. 6.

Visions '91 Is Closing on Challenge Goal

The Visions '91 fund-raising campaign for the Southeast Conference had reached \$171,300 as of late September.

The campaign, which continues until December 31, has a challenge goal of \$200,000, and a basic goal of \$150,000.

If the Conference reaches the challenge goal, funds earmarked for the Endowment Fund will be matched with a \$50,000 gift by an anonymous donor.

Visions '91 is a fund-raising campaign to provide foundational support to Conference activities. Funds from the campaign will go to support new and renewed churches; leadership training communication of identity and mission; a new Conference office; and a Conference endowment fund.

If the Conference reaches the Challenge goal, \$80,000 will go to new and renewed churches; \$40,000 to leadership training; \$16,000 to communicate

identity and mission; \$24,000 to relocate and upgrade Conference facilities; and \$40,000 to an Endowment Fund.

The categories of giving are Visionary (\$10,000 and up); Pillar (\$5,000 to \$9,999); Cornerstone (\$2,500 to \$4,999); Partner (\$1,000 to \$2,499); Nurturer (\$500 to \$999); Supporter (\$100-\$499); Foundation (\$1 to \$99).

Gifts may be given directly or through three-year pledges. Gifts or pledges should be sent to Visions '91 Campaign, Southeast Conference, United Church of Christ, Box 29883, Atlanta, Ga. 30359.

Members of the Campaign Committee are Dr. Bryant, chair; Dr. James Mason; Ren Manning; Lala Allen; Barbara Everett; June Davis; Dick Woodward; James Myers; Rev. Floyd Carmack; Rev. Dick Sales; and Rev. Roy Bain, ex-officio.

Nashville Church Celebrates Big

When Nashville's First United Church decided to mark its 100th anniversary, it planned big ... very big.

The yearlong centennial celebration has included a golf tournament, a crafts fair and barbecue, a TV appearance, a special church logo, and numerous monthly activities.

Founded by Swiss immigrants in October 1891, the former Evangelical and Reformed congregation is one of only 24 churches in the city that are a century old.

The Centennial Golf Invitational Tournament in July drew about 90 players at Opryland Spring House Golf Course. Pastor Bob Kurtz and daughter Beth Carpenter, both pros, conducted a clinic. An evening banquet hosted 130 players and guests.

On Sept. 25, Rev. Kurtz appeared on a local TV interview show hosted by country music host Ralph Emery. The same month, the church hosted a crafts fair and barbecue.

On Oct. 26-27, a banquet and service will be held at Vanderbilt Divinity School. It will include a poem and song by member Albert Maier.

An off-shoot of the celebration was financial aid to the historic Bushy Creek Salem United Church of Christ in Irwin, PA. Founded in the 1770s, the small church is trying to raise \$50,000 to replace its slate roof. Referring to the First United's centennial logo, which says "An Old Church ... With New Life," the Salem Church said in a thank you letter that the Nashville church should add to "With a caring-sharing heart."

Board Approves Sale of Macon Property

The Board of Directors of the Southeast Conference property of inactive First Congregational UCC, of Macon, GA, at its quarterly meeting on Sept. 27-28.

The property, consisting of a small church building and parsonage, and financial assets of the 124-year-old church, were turned over to the Conference last year by agreement.

Proceeds from the sale and other assets would be available for a new church start in Macon. A major study was completed in 1990 of new church possibilities in the Macon area.

The nearby Booker T. Washington Community Center has expressed interest in the church, which is in the Pleasant Hill Historic District.

The church was founded by the American Missionary Association in 1867, and was associated with a school which is now part of the Bibb County school system.

A Macon preservationist expert, Julie C. Groce, who is a member of the Center's board, has suggested that the Community Center preserve the building, and use it for the center's Otis Redding Research Room, a performing arts theater for youth and other community programs.

In another action, the Conference's Board approved proceeding to acquire the property of old Center Congregational Church in Atlanta in cooperation with the church's trustees.

The Conference plans to use the building for staff offices, which are now located at Central Congregational United Church of Christ in DeKalb County, and to reactivate the church. A renovation and expansion project at Central will displace the Conference office next year.

The two-day Board meeting was held at Center Church, located on Moores Mill Road in northwest Atlanta.

In addition, the Board:

Heard presentations about the United Church Board for World Ministries meeting in Atlanta in November.

Heard a report on the Annual Meeting, scheduled for June 12-14 in Atlanta at First Congregational Church, UCC, and the downtown Ramada Inn. The theme will be "Behold, I am Doing a New Thing" from Isaiah 43.

Approved the Finance Committee taking necessary steps on designated funds, including setting up a planned giving program and a Conference Endowment.

Urged completion of the Visions '91 campaign, which has a challenge goal of \$200,000 by Dec. 31.

Asked members to contact churches regarding their life and regular OCWM installments.

The next quarterly meeting of the Board is scheduled for January 31-February 1.

New Alabama-Tennessee and Georgia-South Carolina Officers

These are the people elected to offices and committee positions by the Annual Meetings of the Alabama-Tennessee and Georgia-South Carolina associations.

ALABAMA-TENNESSEE

Moderator: Rev. James Smalley, Pilgrim Congregational UCC, Chattanooga, TN

Vice-Moderator: Rev. Andrew Frierson, First United Church of Christ, Sweetwater, TN

Secretary: Nancy Phillips, Pilgrim Congregational, Chattanooga

Treasurer: William Green, United Church of Huntsville, Huntsville, AL

Church and Ministry Committee: Rev. James Norris, United Church of Huntsville
Mrs. Audrey Livingston, Church of the Savior, Knoxville, TN

Christian Education Committee: Celeste Bridgeforth, Trinity Congregational Church, UCC, Athens, AL

Julpenia Gardener, First Congregational Church, UCC, Chattanooga, TN

Pat Kurtz, First United Church (E&R), Nashville, TN

Stewardship Promotion: Rev. Dick Sales, Pilgrim Congregational Church, UCC, Birmingham

Rev. James Nash, Fairfield Glade Community Church, Fairfield Glade, TN

Church Development and Evangelism: Rev. Robert Kurtz, chair, First United, Nashville

Ila Ray Bennington, Pilgrim Congregational, Chattanooga

William Chew, United Church of Huntsville

Rev. J. T. Lowery, Mountain Grove Congregational Christian Church, Hanceville, AL

Christian Social Justice: Nancy Sales, Pilgrim Congregational, Birmingham

Rev. John Lackey, Church of the Savior, Knoxville

Rev. Leon Dickinson, Pleasant Hill Community Church, UCC, Pleasant Hill, TN

Fern Adams, Pleasant Hill Community Church, UCC, Pleasant Hill, TN

Deborah Douglas, United Christian Church, UCC, Crossville, TN

Dr. Joy Haralick, United Church of Huntsville

Women in Church and Society: Nancy Gannon, Pilgrim Congregational, Chattanooga

Shirley Higgins, Trinity Congregational, Athens

Dr. Annie Neal, Howard Congregational Church, UCC, Nashville, TN

Missy Robinson, First Congregational Church, UCC, Birmingham, AL

Nominating Committee: James Mason, United Church of Huntsville.

GEORGIA-SOUTH CAROLINA

Moderator: Judy Manning, Central Congregational United Church of Christ, DeKalb County, GA

Vice-Moderator: Rev. Robert Johnson, First Congregational Church, UCC, Atlanta, GA

Southeast Conference Board of Directors: Rev. Stephen Sterner, Central Congregational

Christian Education Committee: Susan Washington, First Congregational Church, UCC, Savannah, GA

Mary Boles, First Congregational Church, UCC, Savannah, GA

Denise Brown, Bethany Congregational Church, UCC, Thomasville, GA

Church and Ministry Committee: Rev. Sam Kaetzel, chair, Pilgrim United Church of Christ, Columbia, SC

Rev. John Pearson, First Congregational, Atlanta

Dr. Erna Bryant, Central Congregational

Social Responsibility and OCWM Committee: Rev. Tim Morrison, Pilgrimage United Church of Christ, Marietta, GA

Dr. Oliver Lumpkin, First Congregational, Savannah

Edna Menchhofer, Trinity United Church, UCC, Jonesboro, GA

Women in Church and Society: Dr. Reka Kaetzel, Pilgrim United Church of Christ, Columbia, SC

Deborah Robinson, Midway Congregational UCC, Midway, GA

June Bell, Central Congregational

Church Development and Evangelism: Dr. Heyward Anderson, First Congregational, Savannah

Rev. Jimmy Fields, Plymouth Congregational Church, UCC, Charleston, SC

Dr. Clyde Hall, First Congregational, Savannah

Dr. John Sallstrom, Milledgeville, GA

Nominating Committee: Rev. Frances Bryant, First Congregational, Atlanta

Button Gwinnett Calls New Pastor

Button Gwinnett United Church of Christ has called the Rev. Gerald R. O'Connor as pastor. He assumed ministerial duties at the Lilburn, GA, church on Sept. 8.

The calling of Rev. O'Connor activates a covenant among the congregation, the Southeast Conference and the United Church Board of Homeland Ministries to fund a three-year renewal of the 78-member Gwinnett County church.

The Board of Directors of the Conference and UCBHM approved the covenant in fall 1990. The Conference's total commitment is \$15,000 over a three-year period.

Formerly pastor of St. Paul United Church of Christ of Cincinnati, Rev. O'Connor is a graduate of Elmhurst College and Eden Theological Seminary. He has been director of the Grand Rapids Area Center for Ecumenism in Grand Rapids, Mich. In addition, he was elected twice to the General Synod.

Rev. O'Connor and his wife Barbara have two children, David and Kathryn.

Rev. Susan Hull at Charleston

The Rev. Susan Virginia Hull has been called as associate pastor of 90 UCC member Circular Congregational Church, UCC, in Charleston, SC. She began her ministry at the church in September.

A graduate of Baylor University and Harvard Divinity School, Rev. Hull was formerly chaplain at Woodside Women's Psychiatric Hospital in Redwood City, CA, and associate minister of Woodfords Congregational Church, UCC, Portland, ME. She also served as Baptist Campus Minister at Harvard University.

Rev. Hull was ordained by First Baptist Church, SBC, of Shreveport, LA, and holds standing in the United Church of Christ.

Fredonia Church Has New Pastor

David Cleaver-Bartholomew, an ordinand, has been called as pastor of Fredonia Congregational Church in Barnesville, GA. Approved by the Foothill Association of the Southern California Conference, he will be ordained at the 32-member Fredonia Church on Saturday, Nov. 30.

Mr. Cleaver-Bartholomew graduated from Southern Methodist University and the University of Texas, where he received a masters in public affairs. He is a graduate of Yale Divinity School and a doctoral student in religion at Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, CA.

He is married to the Rev. Dena Cleaver-Bartholomew, assistant rector at an Episcopal parish in Atlanta.

Robbins Parish Installs Pastor

The Rev. Hubert Terry was installed in September as pastor of Barton Chapel and Glen Mary Congregational Christian Church in Robbins, TN. Ordained as a Baptist minister, Rev. Terry has received standing in the Alabama-Tennessee Association. The churches are part of the Robbins Parish. Barton has 24 members and Glen Mary has 23.

Birmingham Has A Busy Retreat

Labor Day weekend found First Congregational Christian Church, UCC, of Birmingham, AL, on retreat at the Twin Pines Conference Center in Sterrett, AL.

Members of the 150-member church spent two event-filled days in study, prayer, reflection, communion and play under a theme of "Making Space for God."

Bible study, which focused both on the inward and outward life of the church and people, was led by Mason Davis and Milton Hurst.

Jones Chapel Lights Up Calvary Scene

At Jones Chapel United Congregational Christian Church, UCC, in Woodbury, GA, the on-going renovation on the church had unexpected effect.

When the cross in an alcove near the pulpit was reilluminated to improve lighting, it produced not only better light but two more crosses, creating an unintentional Calvary scene through shadows.

The 138-member church started the renovation this summer while searching for a new pastor. The work is being done without a fund-raising effort or a loan. "We figured if we went and did it, the money would come," said member Tim Huff.

Triple Anniversary at Trinity

Make it a triple anniversary on November 3 at Trinity United Church, UCC, in Jonesboro, GA. That's the day the 205-member church celebrates its 25th birthday, the pastor's 30th year of ordination and his 35th year of ministry.

Rev. Floyd Carmack is the founding pastor of the church which was established in 1966. Rev. Carmack was ordained in 1961, but had begun preaching in 1956.

ELSEWHERE:

Elon Homes for Children in Elon College, NC opened the Barringer Center for Child Development Aug. 19 on the Snyder Campus. The center offers day care, after-school services and play school ... Warren R. Werner has been appointed Director of Development for Emmaus Homes, Inc., of St. Charles, MO.

AROUND THE CONFERENCE:

Pleasant Hill Community Church is planning its annual trip in October to the Morgan-Scott Project, a UCC-supported mission in Tennessee ... Nearby United Christian Church of Crossville, TN, will hold its church retreat in November ... Chattanooga's Pilgrim Congregational Church held a series of house meetings in September to discuss priority areas in church life.

In Brief

Do you have church news to share? To make the December edition of the Southeast News, please mail a news release, church bulletin or newsletter by Nov. 10 to: Editor, Southeast news, Southeast Conference, United Church of Christ, Box 29883, Atlanta, GA 30359

UPCOMING

Two association meetings are scheduled for October. The date for the South Alabama-Northwest Florida Association is Oct. 5. The East Alabama-West Georgia Association will meet Oct. 19 at Children's Harbor in Alexander City, Ala.

The Southern Regional Meeting of United Church of Christ Women will be held Oct. 11-13 at the San Pedro Center in Winter Park, Fla. Speakers and presenters at the meeting, whose theme is "To Dream a World ...," are Lou Ann Parsons, a United Church Board for World Ministries missionary for 35 years in South Africa, and Mary Sue Gast, new Executive Director of the UCC Coordinating Center for Women in Church and Society. Contact Cynthia Buckwell, Mt. Pleasant, NC, at (704) 436-6877 for information.

Two classes will be offered by Eden Seminary faculty on Jan. 12-24, 1992, at Lake Byrd Conference Center in Avon Park, FL. Dr. Peggy Way will teach on "Family: The Metaphor, The Ministries, The Learnings about Care with an Ecclesial Context," and Dr. Steve Patterson on "I Corinthians." Courses may be taken for credit or audited as continuing education units. Call the Rev. James E. Boler at 1-800-827-6683.

The Florida Conference and the Southern Association of United Church Educators (SAUCE) will hold the Southern Region's first church educators program on Jan. 30-Feb. 1, 1992, at Lake Byrd Conference Center, Avon Park, FL. Donald Griggs of Griggs Educational Service of Livermore, CA is leading the continuing education event. Contact the Rev. James E. Boler at (813) 923-4286 for information.

Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta holds its 13th annual Church Music Workshop on March 27-28, 1992. Principal presenter will be John R. Ferris, retired organist and choir master for Harvard University. For information, call Steven Darsey at (404) 727-5607.

The Third Evangelism Institute for churches in the Southeast Conference is scheduled April 2-4, 1992 in Atlanta. The institute is sponsored by the Conference and the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries.

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